EducationWeek

Questions special education teachers can ask when reviewing an IEP

Review these questions that special education teachers can ask about each section of an IEP for English learners with disabilities. Note that IEP formats and content may vary by district or state.

Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

- [ ] Have I gathered and integrated current performance data from the general education teacher (and ELD teacher, if applicable) alongside my own assessments to paint a complete picture of the student's abilities across academic, behavioral, health, and physical domains?
- [ ] Does this narrative clearly articulate how the student's disability impacts their access to the general education curriculum so that non-special educators understand what adaptations are needed?

Special considerations

- [ ] Is the student dually identified as an English learner? Have I alerted the team and consulted with the ELD teacher to gather the student's linguistic profile, home language background, and proficiency level?
- [ ] Does every teacher working with the student know how to operate their assistive technology or augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) devices, ensure the device travels with them all day, and implement necessary visual or hearing accommodations? Do any non-special educators need a quick hands-on tutorial from me?
- [ ] Have I shared the full behavioral intervention plan (target behavior, function, replacement behaviors, reinforcers, and response procedures) with all staff, ensured they know who to contact during a behavioral incident, and set up a clear system for them to help collect progress-monitoring data?

Accommodations

- [ ] Does every general education, ELD, and specials teacher (art, music, PE) have a clear copy of the student's presentation, response, accessibility, scheduling, and setting accommodations—and understand that they apply across all instructional settings and qualifying assessments?

Supplementary aids and services

- [ ] Which daily supports (such as positive or concrete reinforcers, social stories, or chunked assignments) do I need to create and distribute to all staff so they are applied with identical consistency across settings?
- [ ] How can I collaborate with the general education and ELD teachers to co-create tailored scaffolds that address both the student's disability-related content access needs and their English-language development needs?

Goals and objectives

- [ ] What specialized instruction do I need to deliver directly so the student can meet their IEP goals, and how will I systematically collect data to track progress and update targets?
- [ ] Have I shared relevant academic, behavioral, and related-service goals with the general education and ELD teachers so they can reinforce those skills and target underlying language demands in their classrooms?

Services

- [ ] Are all required special education and related service minutes being delivered at the exact frequency, duration, and location mandated in the IEP—whether provided by me or a general education teacher?
- [ ] Have I collaborated with the ELD and general education teachers to build a schedule that guarantees a dually identified student receives their full legal entitlement to both special education and ELD services without overlapping or missing critical instruction?

Icons: Getty

SOURCES: EdWeek reporting and John Ladesic, an instructional specialist with Montgomery County Public Schools